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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Lord God Omnipotent, You are above all nations. Take our lives and use them for Your purposes. Lord, cleanse our hearts, forgive our sins, and teach us to amend our ways as Your transforming grace changes our lives.

Today, inspire our Senators to be true servants of Your will. In these challenging times, give them the wisdom to labor for justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You. Keep their minds and spirits steady as they strive to please You. We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 13, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COONS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m. today. Following morning business, the Senate will go to executive session to consider the nomination of Adalberto Jordan to be a circuit judge for the Eleventh Circuit. At 5:30 p.m., there will be a cloture vote on the Jordan nomination. We hope to be able to yield back postcloture time and confirm this nomination this evening.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the 1950s, America embarked on the largest public works project in its history: a new web of interstate highways. This came about as a result of then-President Eisenhower reflecting upon a time when he was given an assignment as a young major to bring a caravan of vehicles across the country as part of his duties

in the Army. It was a terrible experience—roads were dilapidated, rutted—and it was something he never forgot.

When he became President of the United States, he decided something should be done about that. This was a tremendous undertaking; 47,000 miles of highways would, for the first time, connect businesses and communities from sea to shining sea. President Eisenhower—of course, a Republican—said the investment would pave the way for a new era of American growth. He said:

America will be a nation of great prosperity, but will be more than that: it will be a nation that is going ahead every day. . . . The expanding horizon is one that staggers the imagination.

President Eisenhower said a new highway system was essential to our economy, our safety, and our progress as a nation. That is just as true today as it was in 1954.

Today, America depends on more than 4 million miles of roadways to keep our economy humming. We use those roads to take the kids across town to school and to take products across the Nation to market. But the system of highways, roadways, railways, and bridges upon which the American economy depends—and in which we invested our great resources during the last century—has fallen into a state of disrepair.

This is hard to comprehend, but more than 70,000 of our bridges are structurally deficient. They need major repairs or need to be replaced completely—70,000 bridges. Every month in America enough pedestrians are killed to fill a jumbo jet. Many of these deaths could have been prevented by proper sidewalks and crosswalks. Bus and train ridership grows every year while public transportation dollars shrink every year. One of every five miles of American roads is not up to safety standards.

Let me repeat: We have 70,000 bridges that are structurally deficient, and we

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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